

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN L-03

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY OSLO
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652:XGDS

TAGS: PBOR, NO

SUBJECT: U.S.-SOVIET BERING SEA MARITIME BOUNDARY

REF: OSLO 6316

1) DEPT APPRECIATES EMBASSY REPORTING ON INTEREST IN NORWAY
ON US/SOVIET MARITIME BOUNDARY ISSUES IN THE BERING SEA AND
ARCTIC.

2) FYI: TO DATE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN
US AND SOVIET OFFICIALS REGARDING THE MARITIME BOUNDARY
ISSUE AND NONE ARE SCHEDULED. DEPT IS CAREFULLY CONSIDERING
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THE APPROACH TO BE TAKEN IN THIS MATTER.
1867 CONVENTION LINE HAS MUCH TO COMMEND IT

BUT FOLLOWING THE LINE INTO THE
ARCTIC NORTH OF THE BERING STRAITS PRESENTS SOME DIFFICUL-
TIES SINCE SOVIET SECTOR POSITION WOULD FOLLOW THE 1867

CONVENTION LINE.

3) WE WOULD BE CONCERNED IF GON WERE TO PRESUME EITHER US SETTLEMENT OF ITS ARCTIC BOUNDARY WITH USSR ON BASIS OF EQUIDISTANCE, OR US EMBRACE OF A SOVIET SECTOR THEORY. EMBASSY WILL RECALL THAT DURING US/NORWEGIAN DISCUSSIONS ON OCTOBER 10-11, AND IN INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS, US DEL MEMBER LEITZELL TOLD FOREIGN MINISTRY LEGAL ADVISER ELIASSON THAT

THERE HAD BEEN NO TALKS ON BERING SEA BOUNDARY WITH SOVIETS AND THAT NONE WERE SCHEDULED. HE SAID NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AS TO US SUBSTANTIVE POSITION, BUT THAT THERE WAS POSSIBILITY US WOULD ACCEPT 1867 TREATY LINE. WHEN LEITZELL INFORMALLY TOLD ELIASSON THAT US UNDERSTOOD NORWEGIAN CONCERNS, ELIASSON SAID THAT NORWAY WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT WITH SOVIETS IN ANY CASE AND THAT ANY U.S. ACTION WITH SOVIETS WOULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT USSR/NORWEGIAN BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS. SENIOR DEPT. OFFICIAL REITERATED THESE POINTS TO FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER SECRETARY STOLTENBERG WHEN HE VISITED WASHINGTON IN NOVEMBER. ASST. SECRETARY IRVING INDICATED TO GON AMBASSADOR SOMMERFELT LAST WEEK THAT U.S. DOES NOT SUPPORT SECTOR THEORY. (MEMCON BEING POUCHED TO POST). END FYI.

4) IF QUERIED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS, YOU CAN INDICATE THAT U.S. IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING THE ISSUE INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF UTILIZING THE 1867 CONVENTION LINE. THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IS FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT IN THE BERING SEA, BUT WE MUST BE MINDFUL OF ARCTIC CONSIDERATIONS AS WELL. THE U.S. INTENDS TO KEEP THE GON FULLY INFORMED OF THE AC-
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TION IT TAKES ON THIS MATTER AND IN THE MEANTIME WILL ENDEAVOR TO DISCOURAGE PRESS SPECULATION. HOWEVER, PUBLIC INTEREST IS KEEN AND EVENTS MAY FORCE AN EARLY DECISION.

5) EMBASSY SHOULD RESPOND TO PRESS INQUIRIES ON THIS ISSUE ON IF ASKED BASIS ONLY, DRAWING ON FOLLOWING TWO POINTS: (1) NO NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN HELD ON THIS MATTER WITH THE USSR; AND (2) THE USG IS AWARE OF THE NORWEGIAN-SOVIET MARITIME BOUNDARY TALKS CONCERNING BARENTS SEA AREA AND THE POSITIONS THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE TAKEN IN THOSE BILATERAL TALKS.
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